Questions Asked During Commissioner Holliday's Twitter Town Hall – June 20, 2012

Q: Would you support creating a hiring review board to make sure that teachers are hired based on merit and NOT politics/nepotism?

Doc H: I support the concept but not sure we have ability for a board due to sheer numbers. Was true intent of KERA. If you know of places where nepotism is going on, there are places you can go to report it. We want the best teachers in position.

NOTE: The original questioner tweeted follow-up questions after the Twitter Town Hall ended.

Where would you go to report it? The current state law only prohibits principals from hiring relatives within their school building.

Any violation of KRS 160.380, the statute that outlines Kentucky's nepotism provisions, should be reported to the Office of Education Accountability (OEA). OEA's toll-free hotline is (800) 242-0520.

Q: What is going to be done to prevent and stop bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ students?

Doc H: KDE & KBE have zero tolerance for bullying in all forms. Legislature has considered bullying legislation at least twice. From a KBE standpoint, it's zero tolerance. Any bullying shouldn't be tolerated. Procedures are in place to prevent it.

Q: With KDE ceding distance learning (KYVS), what challenges does this present to students who desire courses unavailable locally?

Doc H: KDE is becoming a broker of virtual learning; want offer more not fewer courses. We've got many providers in every district. Look at KDE's digital report for details on what the department is doing. Key issue is funding. We have $ to broker but not enough to provide for EVERY student. Hope legislature will consider in next session. Every child should have access. I think you'll see the number of students taking virtual learning courses jump over 50% soon.

Q: Can you talk a little bit about the new assessment and accountability results?

Doc H: These results will be released in October. This is baseline year, so we're expecting drop and are getting folks ready for that. Parents will get national comparisons of students & more about their progress (& how far to go) on a national scale.

Q: When will KDE approve the Dare 2 Care community kitchen program which would provide 5,000 meals a week?

Doc H: I have read a little bit about it, but not as familiar with it. I will consult with child nutrition folks & provide a detailed answer. I can say we try hard to provide excellent nutrition for all students. But we'll get back to you following today's Town Hall.

Q: Do you see a day in the future with less emphasis on standardized test and more on actual learning or creation of knowledge?

Doc H: I think the best thing we can do for our children is prepare them for a liberal arts education. I'm big supporter of arts. But you can't ignore math, sciences either. I think we'll move to a model like Finland; less emphasis on end-of-year tests. More focus on balanced assessments, formative assessments.

Q: What can districts and teachers do to become more familiar with CIITS (Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System)?

Doc H: Use it! I go in quite often to see what's working. It's a one-stop shop that teachers will use more when more is added. We're encouraging teachers to share great lesson plans thru it. Teachers can't buy resources now, so free sharing helps all.

Q: What changes can we expect for Program Reviews?

Doc H: I hear often Program Reviews take too much time. More paper chase than improvement. I've asked staff to streamline process. Schools, districts must do these annual reviews, but encouraging them to rotate in-depth process and use a 5-year rotation. We do not expect a lot of documentation. But schools, districts should have evidence should you be audited by KDE. KDE hopes to tweak process to make more manageable, providing access to programs in non-tested areas.

Q: Will there ever be any student accountability attached to end-of-year test?

Doc H: We recommend 20% of student's grade from EOC (end-of-course) exam (high school). We're still getting suggestions on how to use in K-8.